



NEWS RELEASE

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Department of Consumer Affairs Warns of Hurricane Relief Scams

Urges consumers to be cautious when dealing with relief solicitations

SACRAMENTO – California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Director Charlene Zettel today urged consumers to be on their guard against scam artists who try to take advantage of Hurricane Katrina.

“When disasters like Hurricane Katrina hit, Californians are among the most generous people in the world when it comes to donating to relief agencies,” said Zettel. “Unfortunately, scam artists are quick to try to take advantage of people’s generosity and compassion.”

Zettel recommends California consumers take some common-sense steps to make sure they donate to legitimate relief agencies. Those steps include:

- Being wary of people who call asking for donations to relief efforts.
- Calling organizations yourself. That way, you know you’re dealing with a legitimate agency.
- Never giving in to high-pressure appeals. Legitimate groups will never pressure you to donate.
- Above all, never giving your credit card or bank account numbers.

“We urge Californians to do what they can to help relief organizations,” said Zettel. “However, we also urge them to be careful, especially when they receive unsolicited phone calls, postal mail or e-mail seeking donations.”

Additional tips on how to check out relief agencies and charities are on the DCA web site at www.dca.ca.gov.

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